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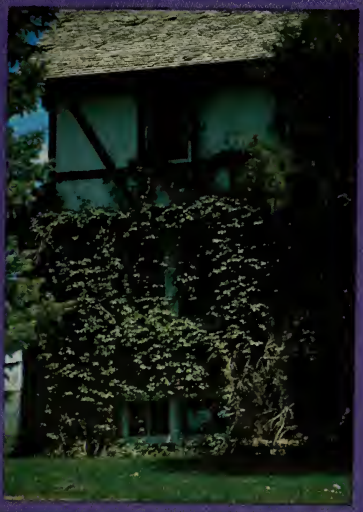
STATE DOCUMENTS

MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL



STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONS

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THEN . . .

ORIGIN

The school was established by law in 1893 as a part of the Boys and Girls Industrial School at Miles City, Montana. In 1919, the State Legislature established the Vocational School for Girls at the present site of Mountain View School which became the official name on January 1, 1968.

PURPOSE

The Mountain View School "has as its primary function the care, education, training, treatment, and rehabilitation of girls under twenty-one (21) years of age who are committed to the school by a court as provided by law."

LIMITATIONS ON COMMITMENT

"No child shall be committed . . . who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years or who does not possess the mental capacity or physical health which will enable her to benefit from the training and educational programs of the school."

COMMITMENT

"Before a child is committed . . . (she) shall be examined by a licensed physician. A child committed . . . shall be accompanied by the order of a commitment, a medical examination report, an adequate social history, and any school records."

PROGRAM

The School operates under a dual philosophy that children tend to act as they are treated, and that behavior which brings girls into an institution is symptomatic of some underlying difficulty. Thus, girls are treated as individuals having innate worth and dignity rather than as "bad" girls or "delinquents" who need to be punished. There is an emphasis on "discipline" as opposed to "punishment".

The program is geared to the diagnosis of underlying problems and to the treatment of these problems through individual programing. Therefore, a girl is closely observed, tested, and interviewed during her orientation and is afterward assigned to specific program areas on the basis of her individual needs.

When a new girl enters the school, she normally follows a program which gradually offers her more freedom and responsibility. There is no set time that she will remain in any one category, rather it is based upon the individuality of each girl.

CATEGORY 1, COTTAGED: The new girl is placed in one of four cottages depending upon age, delinquent behavior, and maturity. During this time, she does not attend school and is not allowed to leave the cottage unless accompanied by a staff member. She is seen by her caseworker, observed by group life staff, given verbal and nonverbal I.Q. and achievement tests. The new commitment is generally cottaged just long enough to get situated in the cottage prior to moving to the next step.

...and NOW

CATEGORY 2, RESTRICTED: The girl is then allowed to attend school but not allowed to participate in any other campus activity. Again, she cannot leave the cottage unless accompanied by a staff member except for school and to see her caseworker.

CATEGORY 3, CAMPUSED: She is now allowed to participate in the Open Door Program. Cottage doors are normally open during daylight hours and the girls are allowed the freedom of the grounds in the cottage and school areas. She may now participate in such activities as basketball, softball, indoor roller skating, ice skating, bike riding, movies, dances, dramatics, and other on-campus activities. She is also eligible for canteen privileges.

CATEGORY 4, OFF CAMPUS: The girl may now be allowed to participate in our community involvement program. We have girls going into the Helena community for bowling, swimming, speech meets, movies, shopping, plays, and community concerts. We have had girls attending public high school, beauty school, and Carroll College classes. Mountain View students have worked as Nursery School Aides in the Head Start Program, kindergartens, and elementary schools. We have had girls working in department stores, restaurants, hospitals, at home, with a relative, or in a prospective foster home.

In addition to the procedure that a new girl follows upon entering the institution, a girl can be placed in any one of the four categories at any time as a means of modifying her behavior.

Normally, unless it is an emergency situation, the girl is not considered for vacation until she has appeared before the Staffing Committee, which is held ten weeks after her arrival. The average length of stay at the school is approximately seven to nine months.

STAFF

The staff functions as a team with the common goal of assisting girls toward a successful return to the community.

Personnel include a professionally trained Superintendent and his Assistant, a Business Manager, ten teachers, a Director of Education, School Counselor, a Clinical Psychologist, three

caseworkers, 21 housemothers, two registered nurses, accountants, cooks, secretaries, recreation leaders, and a maintenance and ground crew.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

The business office under the overall supervision of the Business Manager, performs the function of running the business details of the institution. As well as being a treatment institution, this is a large business; and there are many details involved in the effective management of such an operation. Thus, it is the Business Department which purchases and expends supplies, maintains the payroll, is responsible for handling personnel practices, the purchase, preparation, and serving of all meals; the overall security and effective functioning of the institution itself, as well as providing for the upkeep, maintenance and repairs of the physical plant and grounds. Any expenditure made by the staff or a girl is done through the business office which follows established procedures for purchasing, drawing of supplies, etc.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT: At the Mountain View School, social rehabilitation and classroom instruction are complimentary as to the building of a new life for the resident students.

It is required that each teacher familiarize him or herself with the nature of the basic emotional and sociological problems which have resulted in a girl's being committed to the school.

The teachers make themselves aware of the students' educational level of achievement at the earliest possible moment and, with the aid of the child's caseworker and the Educational Counselor, the student is placed in a socially compatable group and in an educational situation in which the student's success may be expected.

A very casual survey of the girls at Mountain View School will reveal that each girl has a particular set of problems and a unique background. No generalized program can fit an incoming girl. She must be appraised on an individual basis at the classroom level, or she will fail academically at the Mountain View School. If such failure occurs, the rehabilitation of the girl has suffered a considerable blow. On the other hand, success will stimulate growth and raise a girl's view of her own value.

A constant review of the girl's requirements for controls must be balanced with her natural tendency to reject adult authority and discipline. Sympathy and encouragement must promote success within a situation that is so structured that the girl proves to herself that she can both achieve and comply.

Devising a workable educational program oriented toward rehabilitation has been difficult. The teaching staff has been chosen from professionally qualified people who are willing to go beyond the ordinary demands of the teaching field. Teachers have been recruited who are willing to keep abreast, not only of innovations in individualized education, but also to the general theories of social rehabilitation.

The educational department of the Mountain View School works under the guidelines outlined above. The curriculum's emphasis is toward challenging, yet ungraded, courses of a vocational nature. The girls are taught to be nurses' aides, typists, homemakers, waitresses, or nursery school aides. At the same time, a general academic program is maintained for those who will return to public school with a greater chance of acceptance and success.

The present teaching staff is composed of ten teachers who are certified in their various fields by the State of Montana, plus an instructor in personal grooming. Volunteer tutors from Carroll College and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program assist the students in "catching up."

The School follows as closely as possible the requirements and suggestions of the Montana State Department of Public Instruction. This enables girls leaving the school to re-enter public school with the least amount of difficulty.

GROUP LIFE DEPARTMENT

The basic duties of the Group Life Department are the care and custody of the students. Care consists of proper food, clothing, medical and dental care, proper supervision of students in a group living situation, teaching of housekeeping, personal hygiene, and consideration for others. Also various forms of entertainment and recreation, both inside and outside the cottage fall within this realm.

In order to work with the students, we must maintain custody which requires accountability and security to keep runaways to the minimum while insuring the girls' safety.

It is our aim to hire personnel with a moral commitment and a genuine desire to work with underprivileged children. They must also be in agreement with the general philosophy of child care being practiced at the school.

Our program must be warm and supportive toward our students. Although the girls are living in a group situation, they are all individuals and require individual attention and treatment. It is important that the staff has the "show they

care" attitude when a girl brings her problems to them. In this manner, we gain their trust which is very necessary; for without it they will not accept help.

CLINICAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The Clinical Service Department is composed of four caseworkers, a clinical psychologist, a half-time psychiatrist, secretary, two registered nurses and two part-time chaplains.

When each girl is admitted, she is assigned a caseworker who is responsible for determining,

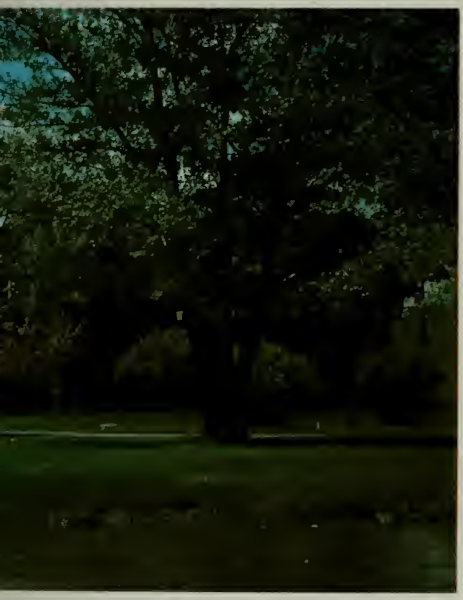
in conjunction with other staff, a plan for the treatment of the individual and coordinating staff efforts in carrying out the plan.

The starting point for the caseworker is learning as much as possible about the girl's background and difficulties, her personality needs, her strengths and weaknesses. Housemothers, teachers, and other staff are consulted to determine which type of program should be employed.

Each girl has a weekly individual counseling session with her caseworker. In addition, the girl is seen at other times as the needs arise. What is

actually done during the counseling sessions is hard to describe. Generally, the caseworker is concerned with helping the girl attain her needs and handle emotions in such a way that will enable her to mature. Frequent consultations with other staff members keep the caseworker aware of the difficulties the girl is having.

The Clinical Psychologist administers various psychological tests to those girls who appear to be in need of intensive examination. Interpretation of test results assists in developing a program for the resident that best meets her needs and gives insight as to possible casual factors of inappropriate behavior. In addition to



testing, the Clinical Psychologist carries a small caseload, holds group counseling sessions and acts as a consultant to all institutional staff.

Approximately every ten weeks, each girl appears before the "Staffing Committee." The Staffing Committee is composed of the Superintendent, the Assistant, the girl's caseworker, the Group Life Supervisor, the School Counselor or the Director of Education and occasionally nurse, chaplain or other staff members. At this time, each department presents a written report on the girl's adjustment.

This information is discussed and the girl is

informed of her status and suggestions are made as to how she can improve. It is the Staffing Committee that decides when a girl is ready to leave the institution.

FORTY-FIVE DAY EVALUATION

In addition to the regular commitments, the institution is receiving short term commitments from the Courts for the purpose of evaluation. This is used for those youths coming to the attention of the Juvenile Court but who may not be candidates for long term treatment in an institutional setting. Final disposition is made at the conclusion of the forty-five day period by the committing court. Recommendations from the institution are considered by the court in determining final disposition.

During the course of the 45-day evaluation period, the student is actively involved in all phases of the "on campus" program. She is assigned a caseworker and receives a battery of psychological tests. She is closely observed in the classroom settings, cottages, and receives individual counseling. She receives a complete physical examination shortly after her arrival at the institution.

At the conclusion of the 45 days, a written evaluation report is submitted to the committing court stating recommendations as well as other pertinent information acquired during the course of the evaluation period.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Sunday religious services are held at the School by Catholic and Protestant chaplains. The

chaplains are also available for individual consultations. Participation in religious services is not made mandatory, although girls are encouraged to participate.

At times, caseworkers also consult with the chaplains to exchange information in meeting the girls' needs. Some girls are allowed to attend services in the Helena community.

RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION OR DISCHARGE

"The Department of Institutions may place out under supervision or discharge, a child residing at the Mountain View School . . . whose conduct indicates that she has satisfactorily adjusted and is otherwise a proper person to be discharged. The Department of Institutions has control over a child placed out under supervision until she attains the age of twenty-one (21) years or is officially discharged and may recall her to the school if she violates the terms of her placement."

Re-entry into a community is an extremely important part of the treatment process. The Aftercare Division is now providing pre-release investigations of the home, supervision and assistance when placed, social histories on girls committed to the school, and numerous other services. The Aftercare Division is a vital, necessary part of the school's continued treatment program.

PHYSICAL PLANT

The Mountain View School includes nine buildings:

Administration - Intensive Treatment Building: This building contains the business office, and the clinical service department's office. The intensive treatment section has housing for a maximum of 14 residents.

Maple, Aspen and Spruce Cottages: The girls not requiring special attention are placed in one of these cottages. Most girls are given a room to themselves. These cottages will house up to 28 girls each.

School Building and Gym: Mountain View School is a class C high school. The gym is used for school purposes and other activities such as plays, roller skating, dances, etc.

Central Kitchen: All food is prepared and served in the central kitchen and dining facility.

Clinic Building: The clinic building contains the nurses' office, Transportation and Clothing Officer, five detention rooms, and an apartment for one staff member.

Shop Building: The shop is the headquarters for the maintenance department. It has a large work area, supply storage, and a place for automotive work.

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